AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-28 (Cancelled)

29.(New)   A voice output apparatus comprising:

a text display unit operable to display a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

a delay estimating unit operable to estimate a delay time according to a display mode of the text message displayed by said text display unit, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed by said text display unit; and

a voice output unit operable to output, via voice message, the information to be transmitted, when the delay time estimated by said delay estimating unit passes after the text message is displayed by said text display unit.

30.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 29,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to estimate the delay time so that the delay time includes a starting time which is the time taken for a user's line of sight to start moving toward the text message after the text message is displayed by said text display unit.

31.(New) The voice output apparatus according to claim 30,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to estimate the delay time so that the delay time further includes a moving time which is the time taken for the user's line of sight to reach the text message after the start of the movement.

32.(New) The voice output apparatus according to claim 31,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to estimate the delay time so that the delay time further includes a focusing time which is the time necessary for the user's line of sight to focus on the text message after reaching the text message.

33.(New) The voice output apparatus according to claim 32, further comprising

a personal information obtaining unit operable to obtain personal information indicating a characteristic of the user,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to estimate the delay time for each user based on personal information obtained by said personal information obtaining unit.

34.(New)　The voice output apparatus according to claim 33,

wherein said personal information obtaining unit is operable to obtain the user's age as the personal information, and

said delay estimating unit is operable to estimate the delay time for the user based on the age obtained by said personal information obtaining unit.

35.(New)　The voice output apparatus according to claim 33,

wherein said personal information obtaining unit is operable to obtain, as the personal information, an eye-speed at which the user's eyeballs move, and

said delay time estimating unit is operable to estimate the delay time for the user based on the eye-speed obtained by said personal information obtaining unit.

36.(New)　The voice output apparatus according to claim 32, further comprising:

an operating unit operable to allow said text display unit to display the text message, and to allow said voice output unit to output a voice message, according to user's operation; and

a habituation specifying unit operable to specify a degree of habituation at which the user operates said operating unit,

wherein said delay time estimation unit is operable to estimate the delay

time in accordance with the user's habituation, based on the degree of habituation specified by said habituation specifying unit.

37.(New)　The voice output apparatus according to claim 36,

wherein said habituation specifying unit is operable to specify, as the degree of habituation, a number of times the user operates said operating unit.

38.(New)　The voice output apparatus according to claim 36,

wherein said habituation specifying unit is operable to specify, as the degree of habituation, an operation time during which the user operates said operating unit.

39.(New)　The voice output apparatus according to claim 32,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to specify the focusing time based on a text display distance between a focal point and the text message displayed by said text display unit, the focal point being set on said voice output apparatus for attracting user's attention.

40.(New)　The voice output apparatus according to claim 39,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to derive the text display distance based on positions of the focal point and the text message

respectively, and to specify the focusing time based on the text display distance.

41.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 37,

wherein said text display unit is operable to display an agent as the focal point, and

said delay estimating unit is operable to derive the text display distance using the agent as a starting point.

42.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 32,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to estimate the delay time by use of sigmoid function.

43.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 31,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to specify the moving time based on the text display distance between a focal point and the text message displayed by said text display unit, the focal point being set on said voice output apparatus for attracting user's attention.

44.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 30,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to specify the starting time

based on the size of characters in the text displayed by said text display unit.

45.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 30,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to specify the starting time based on the text display distance between a focal point and the text message displayed by said text display unit, the focal point being set on said voice output apparatus for attracting user's attention.

46.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 30,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to specify the starting time based on a contrast between a focal point and the text message displayed by said text display unit, the focal point being set on said voice output apparatus for attracting user's attention.

47.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 30,

wherein said text display unit is operable to display the text message by flashing characters in the text message, and

said delay estimating unit is operable to specify the starting time based on a degree of flashing characters in the text displayed by said text display unit.

48.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 29,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to estimate the delay time so that the delay time includes a moving time which is the time taken for a user's line of sight to reach the text message after starting to move toward the text message.

49.(New)   The voice output apparatus according to claim 29,

wherein said delay estimating unit is operable to estimate the delay time so that the delay time includes a focusing time which is the time taken for a user's line of sight to focus on the text message after reaching the text message.

50.(New)   A voice output method used by an information processing apparatus to output a voice message, said method comprising:

a text display step of displaying a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

a delay estimating step of estimating a delay time according to a display mode of the text message displayed in said text display step, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed in said text display step; and

a voice output step of outputting, via voice message, the information to

be transmitted, when the delay time estimated in said delay estimating step passes after the text message is displayed in said text display step.

51.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 50,

wherein in said delay estimation step, the delay time is estimated so that the delay time includes a starting time which is the time taken for a user's line of sight to start moving toward the text message after the text message is displayed in said text display step.

52.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 51,

wherein in said delay estimating step, the delay time is estimated so that the delay time further includes a moving time which is the time taken for the user's line of sight to reach the text message after the start of the movement.

53.(New)   The voice output method according to claim 52,

wherein in said delay estimation step, the delay time is estimated so that the delay time further includes a focusing time which is the time taken for the user's line of sight to focus on the text message after reaching the text message.

54.(New)   A program for causing a computer to execute:

a text display step of displaying a text message which is information to be transmitted to a user;

a delay estimating step of estimating a delay time according to a display mode of the text message displayed in said text display step, the delay time being a time necessary for an action taken by the user to visually identify a text message after the text message is displayed in said text display step; and

a voice output step of outputting, via voice message, the information to be transmitted, when the delay time estimated in said delay estimating step passes after the text message is displayed in said text display step.